



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND HIGHLIGHTS

INTRODUCTION AND HIGHLIGHTS

A. INTRODUCTION

Data recently released from Census 2000 provide an opportunity to examine the extent of changes in racial and ethnic residential segregation in the last 2 decades of the 20th century. Segregation can result from, among other factors, voluntary choices people make about where they want to live or from the involuntary restriction of choices, such as through discrimination in the housing market, or from a lack of information about residential opportunities. This study does not attempt to identify the causes of racial and ethnic residential segregation (or simply “segregation”), nor do we argue that segregation is a more serious problem in one area than another. This report simply describes the extent of, and changes in, segregation over the 1980 to 2000 period. Because segregation is much more of an issue in urban environments, we focused on segregation patterns in metropolitan areas across the United States.

B. RACE AND ETHNICITY

Residential segregation measures are influenced by how race and ethnicity are defined. In 1977, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issued Statistical Policy Directive 15, which provided the framework for data collection on race and ethnicity to federal agencies, including the Census Bureau, for the 1980 decennial census.

That directive identified four racial groups:

- White;
- Negro or Black;
- American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut; and
- Asian or Pacific Islander — and one ethnicity —
- Spanish/Hispanic origin or descent.

The questions on the 1980 and 1990 censuses asked individuals to self-identify with one of these four racial groups and indicate whether they were Hispanic.¹

In the 1990s, after much research and public comment, OMB revised the racial classification to include *five* groups:

- White,
- Black or African American,
- American Indian or Alaska Native,
- Asian, and
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (also referred to as Pacific Islanders).

An additional major change was to permit the individuals to report more than one race. Census 2000

figures indicate that 6.8 million people, or 2.4 percent of the population, reported more than one race.²

C. SEGREGATION MEASURES

This report examines five dimensions of segregation proposed by Massey and Denton (1988). Within each of these dimensions, several segregation measures are possible. In this report we focus on only one segregation measure from each dimension as follows:

evenness dimension:
dissimilarity index

exposure dimension:
isolation index

concentration dimension:
delta index

centralization dimension:
absolute centralization index

clustering dimension:
spatial proximity index

These dimensions and indexes are discussed in more detail in Chapter 2 and in Appendix B.

D. HIGHLIGHTS

- The trend for Blacks or African Americans is clearest of all — declines in segregation were observed over the 1980 to 2000

¹The population censuses have a special dispensation from OMB to allow individuals to designate “Some Other Race” rather than one of those specifically listed. The vast majority of individuals choosing that option are Hispanic (Grieco and Cassidy 2001). The decennial census questions also ask about specific Asian and Pacific Islander races (e.g., Chinese).

²Many of those who report more than one race list “other” as one of the races. About 1.2 percent of the population selected two races which did not include the “other” race. Another 0.2 percent of the population selected three or more races (indicating that they selected at least two races which were not “other”).

period across all dimensions of segregation we considered.

- Despite these declines, residential segregation was still higher for African Americans than for the other groups across all measures. Hispanics or Latinos were generally the next most highly segregated, followed by Asians and Pacific Islanders, and then American Indians and Alaska Natives, across a majority of the measures.
- Asians and Pacific Islanders, as well as Hispanics, tended to experience increases in segregation, though not across all dimensions. Increases were generally larger for Asians and Pacific Islanders than for Hispanics.
- Increases in segregation were apparent for Asians and Pacific Islanders and Hispanics when using the dissimilarity index (evenness), the isolation index (exposure), and the spatial proximity index (clustering). Both groups, however, experienced declines in the absolute centralization index (centralization), and Hispanics also had declines in the delta index (concentration) while Asian and Pacific Islanders showed little change in that measure.
- The story of American Indian and Alaska Native residential segregation was mixed, with declines across some

dimensions of segregation and increases in others.

- In terms of trends across the five dimensions of segregation, declines in segregation were most evident in centralization, where all groups experienced declines over the 1980 to 2000 period when all metropolitan areas are considered. Three of the four groups experienced declines in concentration. Trends for the evenness and clustering dimensions were split, with two racial/ethnic groups experiencing increases and two experiencing declines. Finally, exposure (isolation) was the one dimension where increasing segregation was the norm, with only African Americans experiencing declines.

E. PLAN OF THE REPORT

Chapter 2 discusses the data and methods employed in this report. It covers race and ethnicity measurement, geographic areas and units of analysis, residential segregation measurement, the data used, statistical testing, and guidance on how to interpret the findings. Chapters 3 through 6 focus on the 1980 to 2000 residential segregation patterns of four major racial and ethnic groups:

- Chapter 3: American Indians and Alaska Natives
- Chapter 4: Asian and Pacific Islanders, with a special section

on its subgroups in 2000 — Asians, and Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders

- Chapter 5: Blacks or African Americans
- Chapter 6: Hispanics or Latinos

In each case, non-Hispanic Whites serve as the reference (majority) group, even though in some metropolitan areas they are actually in the minority.

Each chapter presents information in the same way using the same table structure. First, descriptive statistics about the five indexes are presented and discussed. Second, changes over time are discussed using the characteristics of the metropolitan areas to understand differences. Third, the magnitudes of changes are examined and any differing patterns are discussed. Fourth, statistics are presented for all large metropolitan areas (1 million people or more) that have at least 20,000 people or three percent of their population in the minority group. Then, the metropolitan areas with the biggest increases and decreases in segregation are discussed. Each chapter includes graphical representations of residential segregation in the form of scatter plots, histograms, and maps. The chapters close with a summary of findings. Finally, Chapter 7 presents some cross-group comparisons and analyses.